

Worthy to Walk with Jesus in White

Revelation 3:4

“... *they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.*”

Our present text is found in the epistle of the Lord Jesus Christ to His first-century church in Sardis, Asia Minor (Revelation 3:1-6). But the promise He gives applies to all saints in every place and time, not just to those in Sardis at that time. This we know because following this promise is this exhortation: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (v.6).

We here will answer five questions regarding the doctrine in our text:

1. What is it to “walk” with Jesus?
2. What is the “white” in which some will walk with Jesus?
3. Who are the “they” who will walk with Jesus in white?
4. Why are the walkers with Jesus in white “worthy” to do so?
5. When will these worthy ones walk with Jesus in white?

I. What is it to “walk” with Jesus? It is to live in the closest and most intimate relationship *with Him personally*.

This is not presently possible (2 Corinthians 5:6f):

- “while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord”;
- “we walk by faith [in Him], not by sight [of Him]”.

In this present age and here on earth, we do not “walk *with Jesus personally*,” in the closest and most intimate relationship with Him. Rather, we “walk *in Christ Jesus the Lord figuratively*” (Colossians 2:6). To walk *in Him figuratively* and by faith on this sinful earth is good – even though the walker is absent from Him and cannot see Him. We do not now walk *with Jesus personally*.

Similarly, Old Testament saints “walked *before Jesus*,” for they “walked *before God*,” and Jesus is God. To walk *before God/Jesus* is to live with the knowledge that God is always observing you, as in Genesis 17:1: “Jehovah appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am Almighty God; walk *before Me* and be blameless.’” And Old Testament saints sang “I will walk *before Jehovah* in the land of the living” (Psalm 116:9).

We read of only two men who “walked *with God/Jesus*” in their lives here on this earth:

- “Enoch walked with God three hundred years” (Genesis 5:22, 24) – for “He pleased God” (Hebrews 11:5);
- “Noah walked with God” (Genesis 6:9) – for “Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations” (ibid), and a man of great faith (Hebrews 11:7) and “a preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5).

But their walk with Jesus now in heaven is even sweeter than it was here on earth.

Yes, it is true that Jesus’ apostles walked with Him about three years during the days of His incarnation. But they did not do so in the sense in which the term “walk with Jesus” is here used – in the closest and most intimate relationship with Him. For one of them betrayed Him, and the others fled from Him when He was arrested, and they ceased walking with Him when He ascended to heaven. But now they all, with the exception of the betrayer, do indeed “walk with Jesus” in the closest and most intimate relationship with Him. For in heaven they will ever walk with Him, and never flee from Him, and He will never depart from them.

Therefore, to “walk *with Jesus*” in this instance means to stroll side-by-side unhurriedly and unceasingly with Him while enjoying the closest and most intimate relationship with Him.

II. What is the “white” in which some will walk with Jesus? It is the “white garments” (*raiment* in KJV) in which they “shall be clothed” (v.5):

- “garments” are clothes of various sorts;
- “white” denotes purity, holiness, righteousness;
- the phrase “shall be clothed” denotes the passiveness of those who will be clothed in their white garments, for God will clothe them.

These white garments in which saints are and will be clothed by God are the “garments of salvation” and the “robe of righteousness” cited in Isaiah 61:10: “I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for *He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness.*”

And all these white garments are Christ Himself. For He Himself is our “salvation” (Psalm 27:1; Luke 2:30) and our “righteousness” (Jeremiah 23:6 with 33:16; 1 Corinthians 1:30).

Saints in heaven are therefore clothed in Christ. Paul the apostle speaks of this when he desires to be “found *in Christ*, not having my own righteousness, which is from

the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith” (Philippians 3:9).

We read of saints in heaven clothed in these white garments in John the apostle’s declaration in Revelation 7:9-17: “⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, *clothed with white robes* ¹⁴ These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

III. Who are the “they” who will walk with Jesus in white? They are “a few names ... who have not defiled their garments”.

Note that they are but “a *few names* who have not defiled their garments”. Here consider two facts:

- They are identified as *names*, not *persons*. This indicates that Jesus knows who these individuals are. For He knows all His people by name. He can call by name all those who have not defiled their garments.
- They are in number but *few*, not *many*. Most professing Christians wear defiled garments. They would admit, if they were honest, that “we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags [i.e., menstruous cloths]” (Isaiah 64:6). They will be denied from walking with Christ in glory.

Note also that these faithful Christians will have abstained from two things that would defile them.

1. They have not defiled their garments with *worldly living* (James 1:27): “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father” includes “to keep oneself unspotted from the world” (cp. Jude v.23). Faithful Christians live in the world, but they are not of the world, and do not permit themselves to be defiled by the things of and in the world.

They are like a certain white plant described by the Christian writer J.R. Miller. It grew near the opening of a coal mine, where coal dust was continually flying. But it remained white. If someone threw onto it a handful of coal dust, every particle of it rolled off, not a particle adhered. For the white plant was covered with an enamel-like substance which repelled dust.

Likewise, the faithful repel the defilements of the world. They are “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts”, and they “live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present

age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:12f).

And when He comes, we afterward will walk with Him in white.

2. They have not defiled their garments with *spiritual fornication* (Revelation 14:4): “These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.”

Those defiling women include the daughters of false religion – “Babylon The Great, The Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth” (17:5). They who follow Jesus must not defile themselves with the harlotry of false religion and its works-salvation, freewillism, self-righteousness, legalism, and every other thing contrary to God’s grace in Jesus Christ.

IV. Why are the walkers with Jesus in white “worthy” to do so? Because they did not defile their garments. Contrarily, they who are clothed in defiled garments are not worthy to walk with Jesus in heaven.

Concerning this point, consider what is written by John the apostle in Revelation 14:13: “Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.”’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, and *their works follow them.*’”

- Their works do not *precede* them to heaven, as though to prepare a place there worthy for them.
- Nor do their works *accompany* them to heaven, as though to prove their worthiness to enter that place.
- Rather, their works *follow* them to heaven, as evidence that they are worthy to walk there with Jesus in white.

V. When will these worthy ones walk with Jesus in white? After they overcome the world (v.5): “He who overcomes [i.e., *endures to the end* (Matthew 24:9-13)] shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”

All these overcomers clothed in all their sparkling white garments will then stroll with Jesus in heaven and the New Jerusalem. “The Lamb will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters” (Revelation 7:17 adapted). And they will forevermore live in the closest and most intimate relationship with Him personally. Will you be among them?

– Daniel E. Parks